

Recently, I saw this strength in a young Air Force Staff Sergeant named Scott Lilley. Scott was serving in Iraq when an IED left him with a severe brain injury. I think it was last Fourth of July that you came to the White House. Yes, I was one who felt like this guy had no chance. And yet, he—the doctors here used state-of-the-art technology and aggressive treatment to get Scott better. Their perseverance paid off, and so has his. I welcomed he and his mom and dad to the Oval Office the other day. He was more eloquent than I was, which isn't all that hard. [Laughter] He drives a car; he goes to baseball games; he loves to joke.

His doctor calls Scott's recovery miraculous. And thanks to the extraordinary care he received at Bethesda as well his own extraordinary resolve, he is now back on active duty in the Air Force. And we are glad you're here.

The greatest privilege of serving as President is to be the Commander in Chief of such an extraordinary group of men and women who wear our Nation's uniform. And I'm pleased to help start construction on the new hospital that will continue to provide the excellent care our troops deserve. It is fitting that this new facility be built in a place called Bethesda, which draws its name from the Biblical pool of healing. It is there that a lame man was made to walk and was dispatched with the words: "Behold, thou art made whole."

I pray that this will be the site of many miracles of healing, where the lame will walk again, where broken bodies will be made whole, and where you'll always know that you're in our prayers and in the hearts of the American people.

May God bless you, and may God continue to bless our country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. at the National Naval Medical Center. In his remarks, he referred to Representative Chris Van Hollen and Lt. Gov. Anthony G. Brown of Maryland; Capt. Lorenzo York, USN, command chaplain, National Naval Medical Center; and former Senator Bob Dole and former Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna E. Shalala, Cochairs, President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors.

Remarks on Departure From the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda

July 3, 2008

Rescue of Hostages in Colombia

Yesterday, I had the opportunity to speak to President Uribe of Colombia. And he called to give me the good news that hostages had been rescued, including three Americans that had been held since 2003. I congratulated the President. I asked him to congratulate his military and those who had planned it. And I told him what a joyous occasion it must be to know that the plan had worked, that people who were unjustly held are now free to be with their families.

And so I'm proud of our relationship with Colombia, and I'm proud of my friend President Uribe. And I appreciate his courage and his strong leadership and the successful operations they waged.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:56 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Marc Gonsalves, Thomas Howes, and Keith Stansell, former hostages held by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia (FARC).

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

June 28

In the morning, at Camp David, MD, the President had an intelligence briefing.

The President declared an emergency in California and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local response efforts in the area struck by wildfires beginning June 20 and continuing.

June 29

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to Washington, DC.

June 30

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he participated in an interview with print journalists.

The President made additional disaster assistance available to Illinois by authorizing an increase in the level of Federal funding for emergency protective measures undertaken as a result of the severe storms and flooding beginning on June 1 and continuing.

The President made additional disaster assistance available to Wisconsin by authorizing an increase in the level of Federal funding for emergency protective measures undertaken as a result of the severe storms, tornadoes, and flooding beginning on June 5 and continuing.

The President made additional disaster assistance available to Missouri by authorizing an increase in the level of Federal funding for emergency protective measures undertaken as a result of the severe storms and flooding beginning on June 1 and continuing.

The President made additional disaster assistance available to Iowa by authorizing an increase in the level of Federal funding for emergency protective measures undertaken as a result of the severe storms, tornadoes, and flooding beginning on May 25 and continuing.

The President made additional disaster assistance available to Indiana by authorizing an increase in the level of Federal funding for emergency protective measures undertaken as a result of the severe storms and flooding beginning on June 6 and continuing.

July 1

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. He then traveled to Jackson, MS, arriving in the afternoon. Upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Cameron Fox and military personnel and their families.

Later in the afternoon, at a private residence, the President attended a Mississippi Victory Committee and Senator Roger Wicker fundraiser luncheon. Later, he traveled to North Little Rock, AR, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Robbie Powell.

In the late afternoon, the President traveled to Little Rock, AR, where, at a private

residence, he attended an Arkansas Victory 2008 reception. While leaving Little Rock, he stopped to meet individuals attending a birthday party for 7-year-old Marby Meadors.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate Robert Hastings to be Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs).

The President announced his intention to designate Gordon S. Heddell as Acting Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Defense.

July 2

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President participated in separate interviews with foreign print and television journalists. Later, he had a telephone conversation with President Alvaro Uribe Velez of Colombia to congratulate him on the rescue of 15 hostages from the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC).

July 3

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Situation Room, he had a video teleconference with Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq. He then traveled to the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, MD.

Later in the morning, at the National Naval Medical Center, the President participated in an interview with Mike Emanuel of FOX News. Then, also at the National Naval Medical Center, he visited with wounded U.S. military personnel and presented Purple Heart medals to service members.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The White House announced that the President will welcome Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani of Pakistan to the White House on July 28.

The White House announced that the President and Mrs. Bush will travel to South Korea, Thailand, and China in August.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

NOTE: No nominations were submitted to the Senate during the period covered by this issue.

Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released June 28

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to California

Released June 30

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Dana Perino

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 6327, S. 1692, S. 2146, and S. 3180

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Iowa

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Indiana

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Illinois

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Wisconsin

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Missouri

Released July 1

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Tony Fratto

Transcript of a press briefing by National Security Council Senior Director for East Asian Affairs Dennis C. Wilder, Deputy National Security Adviser for International Economic Affairs Daniel M. Price, and Council on Environmental Quality Chairman James L. Connaughton on the President's visit to Japan and the G-8 summit

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 5690, S. 188, S. 254, and S. 682

Fact sheet: Helping Responsible Homeowners Across America

Released July 3

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Dana Perino

Statement by the Press Secretary: Visit of Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani of Pakistan

Statement by the Press Secretary on the President and Mrs. Bush's visit to South Korea, Thailand, and China in August

Fact sheet: Charting a Clear Course for the Economy

Fact sheet: Senate Must Act Quickly on Bipartisan Foreign Intelligence Legislation To Ensure That Our Intelligence Professionals Can Better Protect America From Terrorists

Acts Approved by the President

Approved June 30

H.R. 2642 / Public Law 110-252
Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2008

H.R. 6327 / Public Law 110-253
Federal Aviation Administration Extension Act of 2008

S. 1692 / Public Law 110-254
To grant a Federal charter to Korean War Veterans Association, Incorporated

S. 2146 / Public Law 110-255
To authorize the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to accept, as part of a settlement, diesel emission reduction Supplemental Environmental Projects, and for other purposes

S. 3180 / Public Law 110-256
To temporarily extend the programs under the Higher Education Act of 1965